

# **Corporate Community Investment Service (CorCom)**

## **Documentation of CorCom's Effects on Member Organizations Forming Partnerships**

### **The CorCom Network**

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INTERVIEW DATA

ASSESSMENT OF CORCOM'S EFFECT ON MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

## ASSESSMENT OF CORCOM'S EFFECT ON MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

### 1. Overall Purpose of the Study (taken from the SOW)

“Specifically, this study will look at the network function of CorCom and document the effects it has had on building business/non-profit partnerships. It will identify the actions taken as a result of membership in the CorCom network and to the degree possible, identify effects that CorCom and its approach have had on the PVO members and corporations that have engaged in a dialogue with CorCom and its members.” (See Annex One for complete Scope of Work.)

### 2. Conceptual Framework and Assumptions

Underlying the mission and objectives of CorCom is the assumption that PVOs and NGOs, in today's world of decreasing dollars from traditional sources (donors), need to diversify funding sources to increase their chances of “survivability”. One aspect of that diversification is the idea that forming partnerships or establishing a relationship with for-profit companies, based on the identification of mutually beneficial objectives, will help PVOs and NGOs leverage resources in new and different ways. In other words, to conduct their business differently.

To do so often requires an organization to change the way it thinks and acts. Willingness to change depends on a large number of variables as it moves toward a newly defined organizational vision—a vision of doing business differently to ensure its “survivability.” The mission of the organization may remain the same, but operational changes in fund raising strategies, long range development plans, or the deployment of human resources, for example, must take place. Doing business differently also involves a change in the perception that the organization has of itself as well as a change in its public image: for example, from a “donor based world view” to one having a “partnership world view.” Organizations are also very concerned about how they are perceived by their stakeholders, especially those who depend heavily on donations “to do their good works.”

To achieve these organizational changes, it is assumed that belonging to a network of peers (a support group) will help individual organizations make the necessary transformations. Belonging to a network which offers a forum for exploring issues and new ideas, acquiring new knowledge and skills or validating a new course of action enables an individual organization (and its representative) to cope more easily with the difficulties of changing course, shifting to new paradigms and finally doing business differently.

The key question this assessment seeks to answer is:

*“Did belonging to the CorCom network have a positive effect on the member organization as it sought to change the way it does business, especially in the area of establishing partnerships with for-profit entities to diversity its funding sources in order to help ensure “survivability”? If so, what kinds of effects did membership in the CorCom network have on the organization?”*

### 3. Methodology

The consultant interviewed 12 organizations through their CorCom members and one individual. In some cases the organization was represented by more than one person. Using a questionnaire (Annex Two) as a guide to the interview, the consultant engaged in a dialogue with the organization's representative to determine the effect on the individual and on the organization of membership in the CorCom network. E-mail, personal interviews where possible as well as phone interviews were done over a period of a month.

The consultant, working with PVC, developed a framework for analyzing the data collected during the interviews. This framework is based on a change model used by the consultant in organizational development work. It consists of four "stages" that describe an organization as it reacts to a stimulus for change. For purposes of this analysis, the stages are described in relation to desired change toward establishing partnerships with for-profit organizations. These stages are by no means discrete and often there is overlap. They do, however, provide a way to classify the responses to the interview questions.

- Stage One is **"pre-awareness"**: the state of the organization and its representative(s) to the CorCom network in the area of public/private partnerships *before becoming aware of and/or participating in CorCom's activities*.
- Stage Two is the **"aware/ informed"** stage and describes what **changes** took place in the organization *due to its awareness of CorCom and/or participation in the CorCom network*. Possible indicators that change is taking place are: (1) increased organizational awareness of the need for partnerships, (2) increased discussion within the organization or with members about partnering, (3) new knowledge, skills, information, (4) changed attitudes, (5) increased organizational comfort or (6) agreement with new concepts. It is important to note that a certain number of these indicators/factors must be present before an organization will take action (change its organizational behavior).
- Stage Three is the **"reconfirmation/action stage"** and describes what **changes** resulted from *the presence of a certain critical number of factors mentioned in stage two*. Depending on how the organization's representative to CorCom is perceived within the organization, the changes at this stage may be only individual or they may ripple out from the individual into the fabric of the way the organization conducts its business. Possible indicators of change at this stage are: (1) reconfirmation/reaffirmation publicly of existing beliefs, (2) dissemination of information and materials into the organization, (3) steps toward establishing new relationships, (4) putting in place new ways of doing business, (5) partnering concepts included in a vision or strategic plan, (6) new policies. The changes at this stage pave the way for establishing partnerships.
- Stage Four is the **"culmination"** stage and describes what partnerships were actually formed due to the changes in organizational behavior.

#### 4. **Results Stage One**

All 12 organizations and the one individual (100% of the groups surveyed) said that before becoming aware of CorCom's existence they were either aware of the idea of partnerships with for-profits as a possible business strategy, were thinking about how they might launch/rethink such a strategy or were actually involved in partnerships (some called it a "relationship"). Some illustrative examples:

"We've been involved with corporations for quite a while. We got a drug company to make extra large vitamin A dose capsules and then donate them to us so we...." (Helen Keller)

"We already had a corporate program and we were in the process of rethinking it—how we might expand it." (Aid to Artisans)

"We were in discussions with a multinational company about services we could offer in the area of community development.... So we were moving along this track before CorCom. We were becoming interested in NGO/for-profit relations. That's why our vice-president wanted us to explore CorCom." (World Learning)

"We've had several successful relationships with companies, but I'm not sure they were partnerships. Oil companies come to us because they have 'social obligations' to fulfill and we work something out." (CARE)

"We have a number of relationships/partnerships with corporations. We have successfully diversified our funding and we are business oriented in our approach. We have what we call a 'socially oriented business perspective'." (Cooperative Housing Foundation)

"Cautiously exploring the right types of relationships. Analogy might be the way a seasoned mountaineers would approach an interesting climb." (MI)

"My organization did not believe in the long-term concept, and they still do not believe.... I did and this was a factor in my decision to leave the organization." (PG)

Thus, at the stage where you have organizations becoming aware of CorCom's existence, they represent a very diversified picture. All of them professed to having some kind of knowledge or relationship with for-profit groups, some successful, others not. .

#### 5. **Results Stage Two**

What is clear from the interviews is that CorCom often acted as a catalytic/reinforcing agent at this stage. Given that all 12 organizations and the one individual were at least aware of the concept of partnerships, if not already actively engaged in some sort of relationship with for-profits, 11 (91%) of the organizations and the one individual then went on to discuss what effect CorCom had. (Only one

organization said that being part of the network “...hadn’t really been helpful to us; we’ve not made any contacts through CorCom.”) Some illustrative examples include:

#### Increasing Awareness:

Four of the organizations (36%) stated in one form or another that membership in CorCom increased their awareness of the need for establishing partnerships or relationships with for-profits.

“By bringing in outside speakers, CorCom helped us look at ourselves. I realized we do have products and services we can offer. Attending these meetings reminded me and my organization that we are in the development (raising money) business”. (HK)

(Attending these early meetings) “helped us see what’s in it for the companies.” (IAF)

“It’s valuable to be part of a network. It causes you to look at what you’re doing. It made me more sensitive. My sensitivity to partnership issues was heightened. For example, in dealing with a rapacious company, CorCom knowledge served me as a frame of reference and I was better able to shape my thinking.” (CHF)

Membership is starting to have a very slow positive influence on the part of our staff. The attitude that we shouldn’t participate in designing potential projects for corporate partnerships is changing.” (ADRA)

#### Increasing Comfort (with the idea of partnerships)/Validating the idea:

Whereas increased awareness may be “objective”, increasing an organization’s comfort level with a new paradigm is more “subjective”. Six (55%) of the organizations interviewed stated that they (and their organizations) were beginning to feel more comfortable with the idea of establishing a relationship with a for-profit company. Historically, this is important because many of the NGOs and PVOs have been traditionally leery of being associated with anything that “smacked” of “exploitation” of people in the countries in which they worked.

“CorCom increased our comfort level. We knew other groups were struggling with the same issues; being a member decreased the feeling of isolation.” (HK)

“We overcame a lot of the discomfort we had about dealing with corporations.” (HK)

“I got a lot of comfort out of the first meeting and that encouraged me to keep going.” (ATA)

“CorCom validates a belief we already had.” (GP)

“Membership strengthened our belief in public/private partnerships and validated our marketing plan.” (IESC)

“CorCom opened a window for me, reinforcing what we as an organization were already inking and helped me keep the ideas alive. We already had a corporate program and were in the process of thinking about how we might expand it. CorCom reinforced this, gave me comfort” (ATA)

“I was struck about how conflicted organizations were about entering partnerships. They felt any congruence of agendas was impossible. It was instructive for me to see this and was one of the first effects that belonging to the network had on me.” (CHF)

“I had not been looking at the long term win-win partnership. I knew and believed in social responsibility, but had not seen this perspective before.” (PG)

“We expect to formalize our approach to working with for-profits organizations over the next year or so.” (MI)

Increasing knowledge or stimulating discussion/debate inside the organization:

As an organization grows more aware of or comfortable with the new concepts, it begins to seek out new knowledge. This usually happens through discussion and debate. As new knowledge is disseminated throughout the organization, it is assimilated into existing modes of thinking which are then modified in light of the new knowledge. This is a critical process and the degree to which new information and knowledge are disseminated often determines how successful the change effort will be. Five organizations (45%) stated that membership in the CorCom network had an impact on their level of knowledge or increased the amount of discussion about establishing partnerships. Some illustrative quotes:

“It filled in the knowledge gaps for us.” (IAF)

“Improved my knowledge of the business world.” (AED)

“It has encouraged me to think about diversifying our sources of income. It brought that idea forward and gave it meaning.” (ATA)

“Membership stimulated lots of discussion about how to get corporations interested. Helped us look at areas where we could collaborate. It also stimulated a debate on the process of certification.” (WL)

“It helped me think about how an organization must change to get people involved in this kind of initiative. All of what CorCom has been discussing and studying feeds into an organizational orientation toward the concept of public/private partnerships.” (PACT)

### Skill Building/New Tools:

With comfort and knowledge comes expertise. Skills and tools help people feel like they have some degree of control over the changes that are taking place. Again, five organizations said that one of the effects of belonging to CorCom was it gave them skills and tools. Some illustrative quotes:

“We talked about cause related marketing and HOW TO DO IT! It was practical.” We learned how to use a common language. I had always been willing and motivated and those sessions gave me the ability (to develop partnerships).” (HK)

“Taught us how to approach companies.” (IAF)

“Increased our skills and knowledge around how companies can set up community based programs.” (IAF)

“I guess the most important thing we got out of the meeting was state-of-the-art tools for helping companies and NGOs to get together.” (IAF)

“I got guidance on the nature of partnerships, new knowledge and skills.” (ATA)

“In those early times, the utility of CorCom was getting to know what’s out there, acquiring some knowledge and skills about the whole idea of partnering. A good example of new skills was how to talk to corporations, speak their lingo, especially around the concept of partnerships.” (PACT)

## **6. Results Stage Three**

As the distance from CorCom’s influence increases, it becomes harder to attribute organizational changes to membership in the CorCom network. However, based on the interviews, it is clear that the increased comfort and awareness (with the concept of partnerships), and new knowledge and skills allowed certain CorCom members to undertake actions which would ripple throughout the organization and provoke other actions perhaps leading toward partnerships. Eight (66%) organizations and one individual reported taking some kind of action as a result of membership in CorCom’s network. Some examples are:

### Dissemination of materials:

Three of the organizations reported positive results with information sharing.

“We always kept management informed and made one in-house presentation (of our experiences at a CorCom meeting).” (IAF)

“An organization has to change for it to even approach the private sector. I brought back with

me to the organization's working group (on partnerships) this way of thinking. They pulled out the nuggets and found practical ideas for themselves and for upper management." (PACT)

"I reported back to my staff about what was happening and their thinking was influenced as was mine about partnership issues. I shared all papers and materials." (CHF)

Three of the organizations had mixed results with the impact of shared information.

"I haven't shared much within the organization (because I didn't want to bombard them with memos), but was able to put the Georgia piece in place. The materials are still on my shelf." (AED)

"I can't remember any of the materials." (ATA)

"Some things did seep into the organization. I synthesized the meeting minutes and sent them via e-mail to headquarters; there were also conference calls to headquarters, but the information we sent didn't have any impact on the negotiations with a potential partner." (WL)

### New Ways of Doing Business

CorCom provoked a wide variety of actions within its member organizations. Everything from viewing relationships in a different light and an ensuing new approach to doing business to incorporating a partnership concept in a strategic and a marketing plan. Some examples from six of the organizations. (55%)

"I now look at our existing corporate relations in a different light (they're not just cash cows). I give them time, cultivate them and try to expand our horizons and theirs. CorCom taught me to look at this new relationship, recognize it and enhance it." (HK)

"We began to look at our partnerships in the light of others' experiences. The UN approached us and told us to go seek corporate partners and then come tell them at the May conference what we're doing." (ATA)

"We reexamined the concepts involved in self-sufficiency. It made us think about the concept." (CHF)

"I did a lot of networking as a result of attending CorCom meetings. I got in touch with a group that wanted to set up a virtual college in Tobago." (AED)

"Our president set up a SID's conference and invited Shirley to talk. It was a result of our interest in partnerships." (AED)

"I saw that possible link (with Georgia) and got CorCom to do some leg work for us. That may

have gotten us leads. You'll have to follow up with X." (AED)

"Our meeting with CorCom was a natural. We are putting together an MOU with them. ComCom got us engaged and accelerated our thinking about how other non-profits could be a source of business. It helped refine our marketing plan (a building block of which will be the MOU). It increased our efforts to capture for-profit business." (IESC)

"It made us think about putting into our strategic plan that we would look for outside corporate partners. This was a valuable service. CorCom made me think about how we might apply one of our Mexico models to other countries. We had the approach, but the idea for expanding (scaling up) was born." (CHF)

### Networking with peers

Three organizations (25%) said they had kept in touch with other members of the network. There was no follow up on this question; it appeared that it was mainly just "keeping in touch".

### Steps Toward a Relationship

Three organizations (27%) and the one individual report taking concrete steps toward establishing a relationship with a for-profit entity. For example:

"We've taken some concrete steps toward establishing partnerships with limited results and no real partnerships have been developed. Kellogg, SKB, Vaxicool, and Toyota are some examples. With Toyota we are working with a master agreement. We want them to cut us a deal on cars and we'll let them film their cars "doing good" in real conditions in developing countries" (ADRA)

"Yes we did try to connect with an organization looking for a health care partner that Global Partnerships was currently assisting." (GP)

"We did get a matching grant from PVC to undergo a strategic planning exercise. We made a promise to reach out and begin forming partnerships." (Technoserve)

"I did create my own business, thinking about my potential to promote the concept. I also started a program based on the Caribbean based on the concept, but this did not continue after my departure. I am still promoting the concept." (PG)

## **7. Results Stage Four: Partnerships**

At this point, none of the organizations reported forming an actual partnership.

## **8. Conclusions/Summary**

- All of the organizations were aware of, favorably disposed toward or actively engaged in a relationship with for-profits before they became aware of CorCom's existence.
- Eleven of the organizations said that CorCom membership had a positive effect on the process of moving toward a partnership with a for-profit
- Four of the interviewees said that CorCom membership was instrumental in helping them take a positive step toward forming a partnership.
- As of the interviews, none of the organizations had formed a partnership

## **9. Recommendations for Next Steps**

Most of the interviewees felt strongly about the future of ComCor and offered opinions about what they thought should be the next steps. The most common sentiment was that the early meetings had had their intended effect: overcoming NGO unwillingness to engage in dialogue with for-profits. Three main recommendations are summarized:

- Set up a forum where companies and NGOs can come together to share experiences, explain needs, understand each other's perspectives, speak a common language or "market".
- Two suggested that more training might be helpful.
- It is now time to move forward away from the "should we?" to the "how do we?".

Some illustrative quotations:

"Corporations need a place where they can go if they're interested in forming partnerships."  
(HK)

"CorCom needs to serve as a marketing arm where people can exchange cards and look for qualified leads, but shouldn't abandon the skill building part of the meetings. We need leads and that's a perfect role for CorCom to play. NGOs and PVOs are needed by energy, communication and finance companies to help them in developing countries where they've been unable to operate. NGOs are perfect for training company personnel in IEC, needs assessments, etc. They can provide entry points for companies". (AED)

"The whole process should go outside the government now. We need a marketplace where NGOs and companies can come together and assess each other's needs. The market place should bring together high level people (CEOs, and Executive Directors) to examine the issues. Training should continue." (ATA)

“Corporations and NGOs should come together and ask each other, “What are you thinking about?” CorCom should get local companies to come talk to us, just to establish a common language, have an idea about how they think. CorCom should be a convener of business and NGOs.” (WL)

“We need to jump in, starting building some partnerships; that’s the next stage. We feel there is no model in the sense that you can fill in a corporation’s name and then apply the steps. Each partnership will be different. We should be in the same room as business. We should be asking each other, “Here’s what we want/need; what do you want/need?” We should not be thinking what we can sell to business, but how to form true partnerships.” (PACT)

“We need to focus on how. It’s not a question of should we. Dialogue needs to be, “Here’s what we want/need; what do you want/need?” The model should be a meeting of needs—talk about how you would structure an alliance; how do you break down barriers that exist between public and private sectors. We need to talk freely....” (Technoserve)

“NGOs are eyeing companies as ‘cash cows’. In many instances companies have foundations. We need to look at their business objectives and figure out what’s the win-win situation. Make contact with the marketing and products people—those who make the business decisions. How do we get them interested? We need a place where the NGOs and companies can come together.” (CARE)

“We should have speakers from outside who share their perspective with us. We’ve done enough sharing among ourselves. We need support in replicating our Mexico model—one idea might be for AID to give us seed money. We need to get business people at the upper level. Any partnership should serve both sets of interests. We need more experience in understanding each other’s experiences.” (CHF)

“Understand each other’s position. Communication will be the key. Stop asking, “Where is the money?” The next step for CorCom: work on communication with companies so they can understand the role they can play; create awareness. We need a leader, a champion of the cause. We need a framework that we can peddle. If AID and State want to make partnerships the new paradigm because their funds are decreasing, they should put their money where their mouth is.” (ADRA)